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Category: Oral History

Place: Keating Residence, Muskegon, MI

Author/Interviewee: Jim Keating

Interviewer: Larry and Priscilla Massie

Attendees: Larry Massie, Jim Keating

Topic: John Fetzer's Spiritual Search

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Jim I was on his Board of Trustees for a bit. I don't remember ever meeting. I think the rules about Boards were a lot looser then and I think John Lore (ed note: President of Nazareth College) explained it to me one time. They made some, I think, national rules or something about how a Board of Trustees had to meet at certain times, and I think you had to have more people than your relatives on it or something like that.

Larry For tax purposes.

Jim And these were some grants that he gave. Okay, I see I had to sign this and send it back. So here's the other people who were on the Board.

Larry Oh, that's interesting. That would be interesting.

Jim Yeah, if I know I can trust you to get this stuff back to me...

Larry Oh, absolutely, yeah. Absolutely, I'll send it in the mail to you.

Jim Okay. Here's something from April 1976. Things like this help to date. Dick Williams is hosting a center for biofeedback and mind research conference Sunday, April 4. I don't know if I gave—

Larry This has got some of the original grants in here, doesn't it?

Jim Yeah, yeah, and I think years ago somebody interviewed me, but he didn't seem as interested in—well, he wasn't interested in spiritual stuff. Oh, here's a February 2000 letter—oh, this is from Carolyn Daily to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of John's birth. Oh, this might pertain to the other—I can't remember what his name was, but I think he worked at the Institute ... but this was from Carolyn.

Larry Carolyn Daily?

Jim Yeah, I'll put this—it says we'd like you to give us your feedback on the progression of John's thinking as it led from The Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East to the creation of the foundation. Scott Grimwood doesn't seem to follow his train of thought.

Larry When was that?

Jim This was in February of 2000. Carolyn Daily's letter to me.

Larry Did you ever respond to it?

Jim I think I agreed to be interviewed by—Maybe it was Scott Grimwood.

Larry Oh yeah, he was the archivist there.

Jim It may have been him. So Fetzer did give us a grant at Nazareth (in 1974). It was sort of a modest grant, I think to collect research or something. Oh, and here's

where I'm telling him that I'm going to be sending the proposal. Is the tape recorder on?

Larry Yeah.

Jim Oh okay, that's fine. The proposal really got squelched by the interim president of Nazareth.

Larry Guy from Western, right.

Jim Yeah, it wasn't squelched by anybody at Nazareth because, as I said, John Lore and Sister Mary Bader who was president were both supportive, but then they both left right as I was about to send it forward, and then I had to send it through the interim president and he didn't like the idea.

Larry He sounds miserable.

Jim Well, he was one of these business—

Larry Yeah, bean counter, kind of?

Jim Yeah, anyone who doesn't apply some business principles—doesn't understand it. I think it was just out of his realm of consideration.

Larry The Sisters are quite open to any kind of inquiry, aren't they?

Jim Yeah, yeah, they certainly were, and I think they're still a very open group. This gives some history and helps—I may as well give you all of these.

Larry I'll give them right back to you.

Jim Yeah, you make copies and give them back to me. I think this is the same thing. Yeah, it looks like the same document as far as who was on the Board at the time.

Larry Was your contact at Borgess Hospital—was that Dick Williams by any chance?

Jim I don't know if he was at Borgess.

Larry Well, he was involved there for a while.

Jim Okay, it probably was him then.

Larry Or he may still have been at Western in '74.

Jim There was a Doctor Tolanda, I think. His wife had been a graduate of Nazareth—not while I was there but prior to that, and I think he was at Borgess; and I think I talked to him. I was trying to collect resource people which is, I think, one of the—

Larry And was that like biofeedback at Borgess?

Jim He might have—I can't remember what Tolanda was interested in. I knew I wanted a medical doctor, you know, and he was apparently open to it. I don't remember my conversations with him very well. I don't think I had a lot. I may have just said would you be willing to be a consultant. Told him what we were about. He may have been interested in biofeedback or so, but I just don't remember.

Larry Were you doing this for John or was this your own—

Jim No, this was leading up to my proposal.

Larry I see.

Jim This was kind of what I was explaining because this was right when I was—it says I'm going to—let's see. Within a week I'll be contacting you regarding your proposal for next year. So this was right—I was trying to pull together all these resources. I was trying to do it modestly on a low budget to just get it started, you know?

Larry Sure, yeah.

Jim And kind of test the water. This one is probably in the file somewhere. It's really more about someone else—some other proposals to him but a lot of times there's a link to something.

Larry Sure.

Jim Let's see, I think this is—is this the same one? It starts out the same way—but no, it's a different—

Larry Different proposal?

Jim Apparently or a different summary. It's got some different names in it. These are some of these people he was connected to.

Larry These were not funded though?

Jim I don't know. That was just I think for my information. They were sent to me from John or Carolyn. It's too bad this doesn't have a year date on it. I don't know what that was, but he did send Ken Killick and I to a conference in Detroit one time. He paid for our way to go and to report back to him, and it was one of these, like, holistic—I don't know if you wanted to copy that. It's too bad it doesn't have the date.

Larry Well, I wonder if this—it wouldn't have been that early, '56 but—

Jim No, it couldn't have been because I didn't get to Nazareth until I think it was the fall of '67. There's a lot of—some of this I think were grant applications from other places that went to John in the early days, and I think he was forwarding them to me for my information, to be up to speed on what was going on.

Larry Well, this is—I think this is a different preamble to what was actually written down, but it shows his thoughts at the time.

Jim Was that from John?

Larry I believe it is.

Jim Oh okay, yeah, and I hope it's dated. You realize the importance of dating things now here's a grant application that was exploratory studies January of '74 to July of '74. Maybe we should put these in a separate pile in, that they were sent to me for my information, so they don't get confused with something I did. Now here's one with Ken Killick's curriculum vitae on it.

Larry Oh, really?

Jim Yeah, let's see if this has got some—oh this—I hope there's a date on here somewhere. This is from Les Initiates and what they were doing in Canada and what—how Ken was their like consultant, and it gives Ken's curriculum vitae, so that would be some clue as to when he met John . Boy, from all this historical stuff you see a lot of times people put a month and a day, but they don't put the year. (ed note: in the employment history there is a date as late as 1976)

Larry I know.

Jim Well, this is interesting in that it's got a lot about Ken. I think it was submitted to John.

Larry And maybe prior to him meeting Ken, you think?

Jim Possibly, possibly. It tells that Ken was employed by Bomar, Canada until May of '76. Well, this would be really useful.

Larry Anthological Research Center. That's what they called it, huh?

Jim Let's see, apparently I must have helped him because I see one here where I corrected. Let's see, read me the first sentence of the Anthological Research Center.

Larry Is an organism issued from the Societe Montreal d'Anthologie.

Jim Okay, I changed that on this but it's just my—I guess my suggested rewrites on some of the language in the proposal. I must have done kind of editing it for them before they submitted it. Yeah, I had quite a bit of—if you want to paperclip this to that, you can see.

Larry That's the edited version.

Jim Oh, and Scott Grimwood apparently was the one that I talked to. It seems like I gave him the correspondence that I'm missing here. There should be copies of it because there were a lot of letters back and forth between John and I, and they often told what was going on or what interesting things we were discovering.

Larry Oh really?

Jim Yeah.

Larry Well, so now this is not Les Initiates then, is it?

Jim I think it's the—I believe so.

Larry Oh really? They just called it differently?

Jim Yeah, I think that maybe that may have been a name—that in Canada they gave it a more scientific name and to apply for funds and that type of thing.

Larry Sure. This is very interesting.

Jim If I find more, I'll mail it to you.

Larry Oh, great.

Jim So that—

Larry Then I'll turn it right around and get it back to you.

Jim Sure, and I gave you the proposal.

Larry Right, this is very good stuff.

Jim I wish I could pinpoint—but I'll keep mulling things over.

Larry Yeah, I might just come maybe—

Jim I'll put a couple phone calls in to the Hardys. I did talk to Mary but they're about—Dean was having some health problems.

Larry Yeah, he's going to have a heart operation, I guess.

Jim Yeah, so they were taking him to, I don't know, Ann Arbor or something for--I think it was at least Ann Arbor.

Larry I hope that turns out okay.

Jim Yeah.

Larry Yeah, we had a good discussion with them.

Jim Oh good, you did?

Larry Oh yeah, we went and talked to them.

Jim Did they recall how they met John or when they met John? I'm pretty sure I brought them up there the first time to sit down with him.

Larry You did, right, and then they talked about him coming out there and meditating in the pyramid sometimes, and we know that Rhea actually went with him one time out to Dumont Lake to visit them.

Jim Oh, okay.

Larry And so they told us about the experience down at Schoolcraft.

Jim Oh, the UFO experience?

Larry Yeah, and the loss of time.

Jim Did they tell you the story—it was around Christmas or, like, right before Christmas—about the UFO that was sighted right above the pyramid?

Larry You know, I mentioned that to him and he didn't tell me anything more about that because you had told me.

Jim Oh okay, so you just verified.

Larry Yeah, he just said yeah, and then sometimes evidently they see something out in the lake that looks like maybe it's a flying saucer hovering like ripples.

Jim Did they say they still see—

Larry No, he didn't say he still does.

Jim Interesting thing with that sighting of the 'whatever it was' with the lights above the pyramid was that at the time they had a neighbor who was I think a lawyer, and he called Dean and said, "Do you see what's above your garage?" See, he had a second garage and, of course, the pyramid was right behind the garage.

Larry I wonder if that was Judge Greg?

Jim Might have been, but he said then later the guy refused to verify.

Larry Well he was a probate court judge. He probably didn't want to—

Jim Didn't want it in the paper that he'd seen a strange object in the sky.

Larry Yeah, we know him and his daughter, Chris Greg.

Jim Yeah, supposedly his daughter was coming back from baby-sitting or something and saw it. You know, as you go into Dumont Lake there you have to try and do a horseshoe back in, and so you're up on a hill here and you can see down to the

lake or above the lake. So they saw this glowing thing in the sky, and then when they got into their house, they saw it was right next door, above the pyramid. It wasn't that high apparently.

Larry That would have interested John.

Jim Yeah, yeah, and they had some other story that was pretty wild about UFOs or something. Trying to think of what it was.

Larry Well, she's quite involved with the Templars.

Jim Mary?

Larry Yeah, and goes all over the world I guess, assisting them with different projects.

Jim Yeah, Mary gets pretty far out there in a lot of stuff.

Larry Well she's told us about this—something that she witnessed, or felt it, or something that took place in the Vatican and had to do with Pope Paul and the Templars were there. It's interesting stuff.

Jim When she says the Templars are there, a lot of times she means, like, spiritually she felt them.

Larry Well, she said they had their swords all raised and everything.

Jim I just listen to her and then say, okay, maybe so.

Larry Well, that's my attitude. You know, I'm kind of an agnostic. I'm not saying it's not so, but I think that's the best way to be about a lot of things in life. Otherwise, you know, you're no better than people who adamantly say something is true, you know, say a Baptist or something. They know their way to heaven and there's only one way and you've got to be sprinkled rather than immersed to be baptized, you know?

Jim That's one theory.

Larry There's no use arguing with them.

Jim And here—this was a preliminary proposal. I think this was prior to the proposal.

I think I did like a rough preliminary proposal and then I did this one; so if you want, we can attach it to the proposal.

Larry To the first one, yeah right.

Jim And you're welcome to make a copy of that for Tom Beaver or anybody.

Larry This has got the date on it which is good, '74.

Jim Yeah, April of '74 and that one letter talks about how I'll be sending him the proposal in two weeks or a week or two.

Larry Yeah, this is good stuff.

Jim I hope I can find some more of the correspondence, but I think after I talked to Scott Grimwood I either misplaced it or didn't get it all back. I'm not sure.

Larry Well, maybe they've got it there at the archives.

Jim It should be, yeah, because I told him to make copies. It may be that I just misplaced it after he got it back to me.

Larry We've got your mailing address I think, yeah.

Jim Memorial Drive.

Larry Well, let me write it down in case.

Jim Do you want to shut the tape off for a while?

Larry So you started connecting with him about '72.

Jim I think that was it. It was when he sent out this invitation to the three colleges and the three college presidents asking if they had anybody on their staff that was interested in the kinds of things he was looking for.

Larry Oh, and so they recommended you from Nazareth.

Jim Right, and Lonnie Supnick from K-College and Dick Williams from Western. And so for a period there, then John would meet with me individually just to chat, you know, because he saw that we had a lot of common interests. And that's when he told me, I think I shared this with you, that I was a very lucky man.

Larry Yeah.

Jim And I was—

Larry Because you could publicly admit this, right?

Jim Well, I had so many people I could talk to about it, because I was going to all these meetings, different groups and seeking people.

Larry And he didn't dare quite come out of the closet with his interest.

Jim Yeah, he was pretty cautious about it, because he realized, you know—like I realized I was in the Western Michigan Psychological Association and I was a little careful who I told about it. I mean you don't want to be the weirdo who's into all this stuff.

Larry Yeah, yeah. Well when you've got another life you have to preserve that, too.

Jim Yeah, yeah, and then it became more accepting within the—well even at Nazareth, the first year I taught the evening class. It was open to the public, they called it Exploring Human Potential. And then a year or two later we could call it

Introduction to Psychic Studies. But it seemed like the national climate and interests had changed enough that it was at least acceptable to use that language.

Larry Did that cause enrollment to increase, the name change?

Jim In the classes?

Larry Yeah.

Jim I don't think so because when we called it Exploring Human Potential, the paragraph that described it told what it was, so I don't know. I wasn't conscious of that.

Larry Was that like a general studies course?

Jim Yeah, it wasn't in any particular curriculum. It was just sort of an added on course that anybody could take, and people in the community. It might even have been a non-credit class—and through teaching that, I became a focus of a lot of people saying, “Okay, I’ve had this experience. I don’t know who I can talk to about it, but here’s this guy at a college who’s studying it and open to hearing about people’s experiences.”

Larry Is that Supnick still alive?

Jim I don't know. I never had any contact with him after I wrote that proposal, and I see that I had him as a consultant on that.

Larry You don't know if he had a relationship with John?

Jim No, I don't know. Of the three of us, I felt like he was the least interested in these areas. I felt that his interest was he knew Fetzer had money and wanted to do something with the college, and he was asking for representatives from the college. And Lonnie was in their psych department, I believe, and so he was sort

of exploring—was there something that they wanted to do that could fit into what—the money John had available to offer, you know?

Larry That would have been a turn-off. John didn't like to be asked for money, did he?

Jim Well, in this case, though, he was—John was kind of exploring, “What can I do, what interest is there in the colleges, and what can be set up locally?” And at the time I think he wanted serious study to be done and he wanted it to be kind of legitimized by having professionals do it, and people at colleges, you know, who had a scientific background. My background was more in counseling than in science. I mean, I had statistics courses and stuff like that, but I would have had to use other consultants to—

Larry Yeah.

Jim I was always pretty good at collecting people. I have been reading—did I tell you the story of my father telling me the three books?

Larry No.

Jim When I was, like, a college student he said you should read three books: Power of Positive Thinking, Think and Grow Rich, and Greatest Salesman in the World. He was an insurance salesman and—

Larry Fulton Oursler wrote that, didn't he?

Jim The last one?

Larry Yeah.

Jim I think it was Og Mandino and this one was—my dad was an insurance salesman, and so I thought all these books were about how to sell and make money and that's not my goal in life, so I didn't—I remembered the titles and I would

occasionally read in them a little bit, but I never got into that book at all enough to—I think by hearsay I found out it was about Christ. But a couple weeks ago I was at the Unity Church, they had like a rummage sale, garage sale kind of thing, and here's this book packet of six Napoleon Hill tapes for like \$2 so—outside of his Catholic faith, I'm sure—this was my dad's compass, you know. And so I bought it and I've been listening to the tapes in the car. It's amazing how much these things were written in 1930, '35. They're in "THE SECRET," they're in the Abraham materials, they're in the Course in Miracles. All these basic principles that are still the same, that's why these books are classics. They really tuned into some basic things like—

Larry Well, you know, there's a lot of similarities between many of these things.

Jim Oh yeah, the truth is truth.

Larry Yeah.

Jim You know, when you strip away all the little rituals and things and cultural idiosyncrasies that's developed around it, you know, the basic truths are—

Larry They're universal. I was reading an article about scientology and, you know, a lot of the same things are even in that. And I don't know what the bottom line of that will be, whether it's a fraud or not, but a lot of the same materials.

Jim Oh, the scientology that a lot of the movie stars—

Larry Hubbard wrote this book, Dianetics.

Jim Right, right.

Larry Back in the 1950's.

Jim Okay, I picked up some copies of that in a library book sale, and I think they even had the shrink wrap still on them or something.

Larry Oh, really?

Jim But I started reading them a little bit and it was too much of a hierarchy in there. I just kind of got turned off early on, so I never really—but again, it seemed like there were principles there that were true, but the way they had it set up it just seemed a little too foreign for my tastes.

Larry Yeah, yeah. Some movie stars, Tom Cruise in particular, is a spokesman for that.

Jim Yeah, yeah.